

Waterton Lakes National Park Alberta

Canadian Section

Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park

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LOCATION

Waterton Lakes National Park is an outstanding mountainous area rising abruptly from the prairies in the south-west corner of Alberta. Set apart as a National Park in 1895, it extends over 203 square miles along the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains and immediately to the International Boundary. Glacier National Park, Montana, joins it to the south, the two Parks together forming Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park. (The formation of this Peace Park in 1932 was the first of its kind in the world.)

The detailed map in this folder has been prepared especially to assist visitors to identify readily the various features of the Park.

PURPOSE

Waterton Lakes National Park is one of Canada's 19 National Parks which form a chain of nature sanctuaries extending from Mount Revelstoke in British Columbia to Terra Nova in Newfoundland. These Parks have been established for the preservation of selected areas in their natural state for the benefit, education and enjoyment of present and future generations of Canadians.

This vast area of more than 29,000 square miles is administered by the National and Historic Parks Branch, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources.

NATURAL FEATURES

GEOLICAL

The mountains within the Park are carved out of a series of layered sediments over a mile thick. They include some of the oldest rocks known in the Rocky Mountains of Canada. Some of these rocks show structures which are believed to be fossilized algae. The old sediments were uplifted and displaced horizontally in relatively late geological time and now lie adjacent to much younger sediments in the north-eastern section of the Park, which have yielded fossil shells. The uplifted mountains have been progressively dissected by eroding streams and further modified by alpine glaciation. The results are the sharp peaks, narrow ridges and interlocked U-shaped valleys. The highest peak is Mount Blakiston with an altitude of 9,600 feet.

The distinctive purple, red, green and grey colouring of the various geological formations

throughout the park has been caused by chemical change in the minute mineral particles making up formations. This chemical change was brought about by changes in climate while the particles were moved to other areas by the waters which eroded their original location.

Waterton Lakes is noteworthy for its glacial sculpturing which is well illustrated in the prominent cirques, rock-basin lakes or tarns, U-shaped valleys, hanging valleys and waterfalls. One of the most conspicuous features of the Park area is the main chain of lakes. The largest lake, Upper Waterton, is seven miles long and one-half mile wide. In places it is over 450 feet deep. This lake, which spans the International Boundary, separates the Lewis and Clark Ranges and occupies part of a valley that has been considerably deepened and widened by valley glaciers. A hanging valley formed by this deepening caused Cameron Falls in the townsite area.

Notches formed in the rock by frost and snow water are much in evidence coming down the side of Vimy Peak. The light green bare streaks down the mountain above the townsite from Bertha Peak and elsewhere were left by snow slides which swept the forest from their pathway leaving only low shrubs and grasses.

A great overthrust which affected the mountains on this eastern slope of the Continental Divide is also characteristic of this area. The pressure of folding was so great that some of the oldest rocks in this region now lie younger rocks and thus form a few 'upside down' mountains such as Vimy Ridge, Crandell Mountain and other mountains that carry on into Glacier National Park along the eastern edge of the Park.



Cameron Lake and Mount Custer.

The townsite is built on a delta deposited by Cameron Creek. It is believed that most of the sediments were deposited while the Cameron and Alderson glaciers were still present farther up the valleys. The grinding of the Waterton Glacier against Bertha Mountain produced a sharp bank over which Cameron Falls now flows. The old delta can be seen from the viewpoint at the top of the Bears Hump trail.

PLANTLIFE

Waterton Lakes National Park is in the transition zone between the prairie and montane life zones making it botanically one of the most interesting areas in the country. Plants characteristic of both the prairies and the mountains grow in profusion throughout the Park. The flowers present an ever-changing carpet of colour for most of the summer season. Amongst the better known flowers are the wild rose, large-flowered gaillardia, aster, Indian paint brush, larkspur, wild geranium, pasque flower, double wind flower, false hellebore, yellow columbine, avalanche lily, and Jacob's ladder. Balsamroot, bear grass and mariposa lily are special features among the wildflowers of the Park.

Some of the more common shrubs found in the Park are shrubby cinquefoil, bearberry, buffalo berry, silver olive, dogwood, juniper, saskatoon and chokeberry.

Most of the trees in the Park are evergreen. At the lower altitudes Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, limber pine, western white pine and white spruce are common. At the higher altitudes Engelmann spruce, alpine fir and mountain larch can be found. An interesting hybrid between Engelmann spruce and white spruce occurs throughout the Park. In the lower regions of the Park and adjacent to the prairie areas are the deciduous or broad leaf trees, the most common of which are the trembling aspen, paper birch, cottonwood, willow, Douglas maple, and sitka alder. Perhaps the most noticeable of the trees is the mountain ash, whose berries turn a brilliant red in the autumn.

WILDLIFE

The Park is a wildlife sanctuary in which all wild animals are protected from hunting and trapping. Consequently many have become accustomed to close association with man and can be observed at short range. Because they



Where the mountains rise from the prairies.

are still wild animals they should be viewed and photographed with caution.

The larger mammals characteristic of the Park are: black bear, grizzly bear, cougar, elk, mule deer, moose, bighorn sheep and mountain goat. A small herd of plains bison is maintained in a paddock near the north park entrance. This species roamed the foothills and mountain valleys years ago. Whitetailed deer are occasionally seen in the park.

Some of the smaller mammals characteristic of Waterton Park are: coyote, marten, short-tailed weasel, lynx, wolverine, skunk, badger, bobcat, pika, snowshoe hare, hoary marmot, columbian ground squirrel, golden mantled ground squirrel, red squirrel, pocket gopher, beaver, and muskrat.

Waterton Park has a rich and varied bird life. In the spring and autumn fair numbers of migrating ducks, geese and swans rest in the lakes. Many ducks remain in the Park throughout the summer to nest. The contrastingly marked harlequin duck is occasionally seen in mountain rivers and streams where it negotiates the rapids with ease.

Golden eagles are frequently seen soaring and gliding above the mountain slopes. Several species of hawks occur at the lower elevations.

Blue grouse occur in the grassy or shrubby vegetation of the mountain slopes. Geese and whitetailed ptarmigan are sometimes encountered on the alpine meadows around the high elevation lakes.

MOTOR-BOATS

Boating is a popular pastime in the Park. Motor-boats are permitted only on the main Waterton Lakes and Maskinonge Lake. Boat docking and launching facilities are available at the townsite docks and nearby on the Middle Lake near Lake Linnet.

Trips on the lake, and as far as Gothaunt Landing in Glacier National Park are offered by commercial interests.

Emerald Bay in the townsite area of the Upper Lake is a restricted boating area. As a safety measure boats are restricted to a maximum speed of 5 miles per hour. All boats operating on the lakes must carry proper safety equipment and conform with federal navigation regulations.

HOW TO REACH THE PARK

Most visitors travel to Waterton Lakes National Park by car. Alberta Highways 5 and 6 lead into the Park from the north and east and Montana route 17 enters from the south. Buses run twice daily from Calgary and Lethbridge during the summer months only. Visitors traveling by train should make bus connections at Lethbridge or Fort Macleod. Lethbridge airport is served by Trans-Canada Airlines. A small landing field is located near Pincher Creek.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PARK

Waterton Lakes National Park derives its name from the lakes that form the main valley. These lakes were named in honour of Charles Waterton, famed 18th century English naturalist, by Lieut. Thomas Blakiston who led a section of the Palliser Expedition of 1857-1860. Mount Blakiston perpetuates the name of this officer.

The expedition marked a turning point in the history of the region which hitherto had been practically unknown territory and a stronghold of the hostile Blackfoot Indian Federation. In 1868 traces of oil were discovered in Linnehum Creek and Alberta's first oil well was drilled there in 1902. Some of this equipment can still be seen



Young red-tailed hawk.

trailer area is nearby and a nominal fee is charged for the use of this particular campground for periods up to 21 days.

Smaller campgrounds are available at Cameron Lake, Crandell Mountain and Belly River where tent sites, kitchens and sanitary facilities are provided free.

Visitors who wish to camp away from the road will find adequate shelter at most of the high lakes. They must register their overnight trip with the Warden Service prior to leaving and check in with the Warden when they return.

Picnic shelters and wayside tables are located at various points throughout the park as indicated on the map. The majority of these free picnic sites have a picnic shelter with firewood, water, and sanitary facilities.

ACCOMMODATION

Details of accommodation are available at the Park Information Centre. Reservations are not made by National Park staff.

PRESERVATION

National Parks are selected areas set apart as nature sanctuaries and special care is taken to maintain them in their natural state. For this reason all birds, animals, wildlife, trees, rocks and fossils are to remain undisturbed. Even the wildflowers are not to be picked; they are to be left for others to enjoy. Feeding, touching or molesting wild animals is not permitted. This is in the interests of the animal, as well as the human who could receive serious injury.

Please help protect your own park for future enjoyment. It is part of your national inheritance.

SEASON

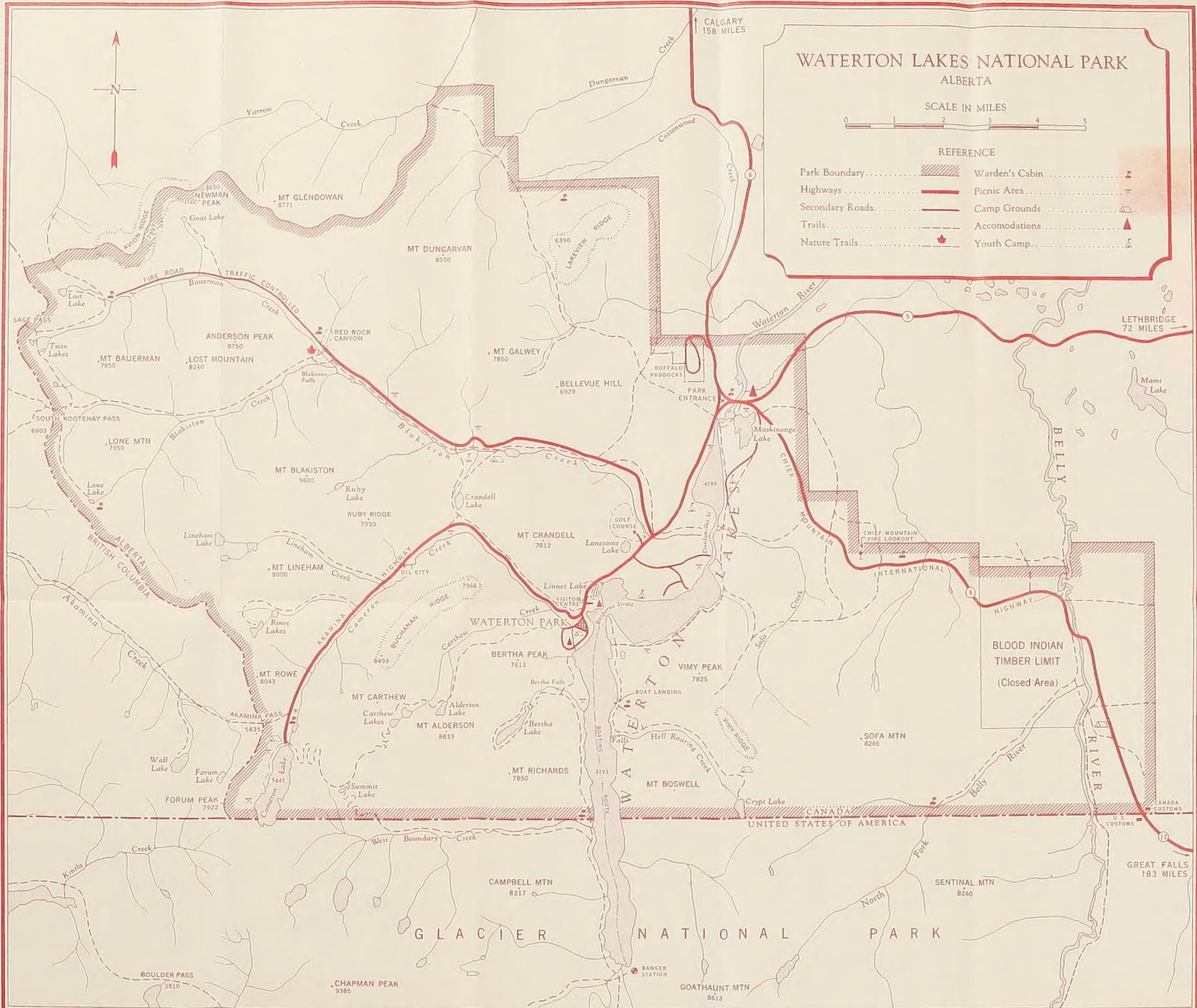
The Park is open throughout the year, but it is only from May to September that all the facilities are provided in the townsite. During the winter months a motel, a service station and store are usually open.

CAMPING

Four campgrounds readily accessible to the motoring public are available. The serviced campground, at the south end of the townsite, is completely equipped with kitchen, laundry and washroom facilities with showers. A modern



Rocky mountain goats are seen occasionally.



from the Akamina Highway some 5 miles from the townsite.

The gradual settlement of the region ultimately led to the filing of a petition to make this area a National Park. Most active in the promoting of this objective was John George "Kootenai" Brown, who was later to become the first Park Warden and subsequently the Acting Park Superintendent. Kootenai Brown lies buried between his two wives in a specially marked grave near the Lower Lake (Knight's Lake).

The idea to link Waterton Lakes National Park with Glacier National Park in Montana originated at the first goodwill meeting of the Rotary Clubs of Alberta and Montana in 1931. By their efforts laws were passed the following year by Canada and the United States of America to link the two parks into the first International Peace Park in the world. The Association formed by the original Rotarians meets annually on alternate sides of the border to renew their pledge of friendship and foster goodwill throughout the world.

Although the Park has been set apart primarily to preserve its natural features for the enjoyment of the future generations, the Parks Service has also provided other recreation facilities. In addition to those already mentioned, there are: an 18-hole golf course, tennis courts, modern swimming pool and a children's playground.

Waterton Park Townsite contains all the customary services of a modern community, with hotels, motels and restaurants located throughout the business area. A motion picture

theatre and dance pavilion operate during the summer.

Persons wishing additional information concerning the Park may address their inquiries to:
The Superintendent,

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